DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 167 234 **JC 790 189**

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TITLE JCC Recruitment, Retention, Attrition Project.
INSTITUTION Jefferson Community Coll., Louisville, Ky.
PUB DATE 6 Apr 79
NOTE 24p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; Class Attendance; Class Management; Classroom Environment; College Faculty; Community Colleges; Courses; *Dropout Prevention; *Faculty Advisors; Guidance Functions; *Junior Colleges; Publicize; School Holding Power; *Student Recruitment; *Student Teacher Relationship; Teacher Influence; *Teacher Role; Teaching Techniques

ABSTRACT

In an effort to reduce the class attrition rate of 40% at Jefferson Community College (JCC), and to investigate the entire process of recruitment, retention, and attrition (RRA), a series of four faculty workshops were held. The plan was to look at the RRA process from the student's point of view in terms of four phases: (1) the pre-enrollment phase includes aspects such as the school's image and facilities, public relations and public information, recruiting, and getting people to the campus; (2) the campus enrollment phase includes correspondence with prospective students, student orientation/assessment, advising, and registration; (3) the class attendance phase includes academic policies and procedures, the classroom environment and classroom management, the students, and faculty development; and (4) the post-class phase includes academic policies and procedures, and research. Reports from faculty workshops are included in this document. The first of these is a handbook of ideas to encourage student retention, which focuses on faculty/student interaction, general classroom management, and student and faculty initiated activities. The second report suggests ways in which individual faculty members and the institution as a whole can participate in student recruitment. The final report considers the role of faculty, departmental divisions, and the institution in advising new and returning students. (AYC)

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JCC Recruitment, Retention, Attrition Project

Ronald J. Horvath

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Jefferson Community College
Louisville, Kentucky

JC 790 189

April 6, 1979

Background

Our ability to produce institutional research data and several semesters of declining enrollments were the two factors which prompted an extenstive study of our "in-class" attrition. On a college-wide basis, we found that approximately 40% of our class enrollments received either a failing grade or withdrew from the course. All individual sections were studied for both fall 1977 and spring 1978.

The data were subdivided by class sections, departments, and divisions. In the spring of 1978, we met individually with the Division Chairman to discuss the data for his/her Division. From these meetings, an overall strategy was developed to attack the problem. The strategy was based on these simple assumptions:

1. An overall class attrition rate of 40% was too high, even though it matched the national average.
2. Faculty members themselves would be our best resource to help reduce the 40% rate.
3. Class attrition would be an excellent starting point to examine the entire process of recruitment, retention, and attrition.

Current Status

A series of four (4) Workshops was established for the faculty. The first one, held in July 1978, focused on the overall problem and introduced the faculty for the general plann for the RRA Project.

The essence of the general plan was to look at the RRA process from the student's point of view. Attachments I, I(A), and I(B) provide the definitions and related elements for:

I Pre-Enrollment Phase
II College Enrollment Phase
III Class Attendance Phase
IV Post-Class Phase

Faculty workshops focusing on a specific topic were scheduled in August, September, and October following the monthly faculty meeting. Faculty were randomly assigned to groups of 8-10 with a Moderator and Recorder assigned.

Each group dealt with the specific topic for an hour and then filed a written report to the Office of the Director. The written reports were edited, published, and distributed to the faculty. A copy of each is attached.

Attachment	Title	Reference
II	"A Handbook of Ideas to Encourage Student Retention"	Class Attendance Phase
III	"Recruiting"	Pre-Enrollment Phase
IV	"Advising"	College Enrollment Phase

Conclusion

Many of the specific suggestions generated by the reports have been implemented or are being worked on. The most encouraging result so far has been the positive attitude of the faculty toward the entire process. The "awareness level" has been raised considerably by the fact that we are relying on ourselves for solutions to problems that are our own.

Fall class statistics will not be ready for at least a month, so our comparison data are not yet complete.

ATTACHMENT I

PRE - ENROLLMENT PHASE

Operational Definition: Time span up the point at which a person calls or writes the college for information.

A. Image of Jefferson Community College
B. Campus Facilities
C. Public Relations and Public Information
D. Recruiting
E. Getting People to the Campus.

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CAMPUS ENROLLMENT PHASE

Operational Definition: Time span includes first contact (letter or telephone) with the college to the time s/he walks through the classroom doorway to the first day of classes.

A. Correspondence and Information
B. Orientation/Assessment of Students
C. Advising
D. Registration

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CLASS ATTENDANCE PHASE

Operational Definition: Time span includes first class meeting to course completion or withdrawal.

A. Academic Policies/Procedures
B. Classroom Environment
C. Classroom Management
D. Students
E. Faculty Development

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ATTACHMENT I(B)

POST CLASS PHASE

Operational Definition: Time span includes course completion or withdrawal to beginning of next semester,

A. Academic Policies/Procedures

B. Research

C. Others

ATTACHMENT II

A HANDBOOK OF IDEAS

TO ENCOURAGE

STUDENT RETENTION

Jefferson Community College
Faculty/Staff Seminar
August 4, 1978
Louisville, Kentucky

To: JCC Faculty/Staff

From: Ronald J. Horvath

Re: Student Retention

The attached document entitled "A Handbook of Ideas to Encourage Student Retention" is a product of the August 4 Faculty Seminar. From the ten (10) mini-groups which met and exchanged ideas, we received approximately 125 suggestions. After duplications were deleted, ideas combined, and some slight editing, we were able to identify sixty-three (63) positive suggestions for faculty use in dealing with Retention/Attrition.

The sixty-three ideas were subdivided into four general categories:

I. Faculty/Student Interaction

II. General Classroom Managment

III. Student Initiated Activities

IV. Faculty Initiated Activities

Once again, the Handbook is a product of our collective ideas, judgements, and past experience. Although every idea cannot be used by every faculty member (styles differ), we have demonstrated that we ourselves are our best resource.

Many thanks to all who participated in this sharing project.

1. FACULTY/STUDENT INTERACTION

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION - THIS CATEGORY CONTAINS ELEMENTS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE AFFECTIVE DOMAIN OF STUDENT GROWTH BROUGHT ABOUT BY FACULTY/STUDENT INTERACTION. PSYCHE, EGO, INDIVIDUAL WORTH ARE ALL INTRICATELY BOUND WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK.

1. Learn the name of each student as quickly as possible and use the student's name in class. Based upon your own style, student preference, and the classroom atmosphere you want to create:
   a. Call on the students by their first names.
   b. Call on the students by using Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.

2. Tell the student by what name and title you prefer to be called (Prof., Dr., Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., or First Name.

3. At the end of each class period, ask one student to stay for a minute to chat (compliment on something; tell student you missed him/her if absent, etc.)

4. Instead of returning tests, quizzes, themes in class, ask students to stop by your office to pick them up. This also presents an opportunity to talk informally with students.

5. Call students on the telephone if they are absent. Make an appointment with them to discuss attendance, make-up work, etc.

6. Get feedback periodically from students (perhaps a select few) on their perceptions of your attitudes toward them, your personal involvement, etc.

7. Socialize with students as your "style" permits by attending their club or social activities, by having lunch with them, by walking with them between classes, etc.

8. Conduct a personal interview with all students sometime during the semester.

9. Provide positive reinforcement whenever possible; give students a respectful answer to any question they might ask.

10. Listen intently to student comments and opinions. By using a "lateral thinking technique" (adding to ideas rather than dismissing them), students feel that their ideas, comments, and opinions are worthwhile.

11. Be aware of the difference between students' classroom mistakes and their personal successes/failures.

12. Be honest about your feelings, opinions, and attitudes toward students and toward the subject matter. Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know all the answers.

13. If a student tells you something in confidence, respect that confidence. Avoid making value judgements (verbally or non-verbally) about these confidences.

14. Lend some of your books (reference) to students and borrow some of theirs in return. You can initiate the process by saying, "I've just read a great book on _____, would anyone like to borrow it?"

15. Give your telephone number to students and the location of your office.

16. At first class meeting, pair up the students and have them get acquainted with one another. Switch partners every five (5) minutes.

17. Have the students establish a "buddy" system for absences, work missed, assignments, tutoring, etc. Exchange telephone numbers; pair them up by major or geographical proximity.

II. GENERAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION - THIS SECTION FOCUSES LITERALLY ON THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS OF YOUR CLASSES. THE ITEMS AS A GROUP EMPHASIZE PLANNING, ORDERLINESS, AND GENERAL GOOD SENSE.

1. Circulate around the class as you talk or ask questions. This movement creates a physical closeness to the students. Avoid standing behind the lecturn or sitting behind the desk for the entire period. Do not allow the classroom to set up artificial barriers between you and the students.

2. Give each student a mid-term grade and indicate what each student must do to improve.

3. Tell the students (orally and in writing) what your attendance policy is. Make them aware of your deep concern for attendance and remind them periodically of the policy and the concern.

4. Conduct a full instructional period on the first day of classes. This activity sets a positive tone for the learning environment you want to set. Engage in some of the interpersonal activities listed elsewhere.

5. List and discuss your course objectives on the first day. Let students know how your course can fit in with their personal/career goals. Discuss some of the fears, apprehensions that both you and the students have. Tell them what they should expect of your and how you will contribute to their learning.

6. Let students know that the learning resources you use in class (slides, tapes, films) are available to them outside of class. Explain the procedures to secure the material and take them to the area.

7. Have students fill out an index card with name, address, telephone number, goals, and other personal information you think is important.

8. If the subject matter is appropriate, use a pre-test to determine their knowledge, background, expertise, etc.

9. Return tests, quizzes, and papers as soon as possible. Write comments (+ and -) when appropriate.

10. Vary your instructional techniques (lecture, discussion, debate, small groups, films, etc.).

11. When you answer a student's question, be sure s/he understands your answer. Make a student repeat the answer in his/her own words.

12. Get to class before the students arrive; be the last one to leave.

13. Use familiar examples in presenting materials. If you teach rules, principles, definitions, and theorems, explicate these with concrete examples that students can understand.

14. If you had to miss a class, explain why and what you will do to make up the time and/or materials.

15. Clarify and have the students understand what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior in a classroom. Be consistent in enforcing your rules.

16. Good eye contact with students is extremely important both in and out of class.

17. Allow students to switch classes if work schedules change or other salient reasons develop. Cooperate with colleague if s/he makes such a request.

18. Be prepared to use an alternate approach if the one you've chosen seems to bog down. You should be confident enough with your own material so that student interests and concerns, not lecture notes, determine the format of instruction.

19. Throughout the course, but particularly during the crucial first class sessions:

    a. stress a positive "you can handle it" attitude
    b. emphasize your willingness to give individual help
    c. point out the relevancy of your subject matter to the concerns and goals of your students
    d. capitalize on opportunities to praise the abilities and contributions students whose status in the course is in doubt; well-timed encouragement could mean the difference between retention and attrition.

20. Distribute an outline of your lecture notes before class starts. This approach assists students in organizing the material you are presenting.

21. If you require a term paper or research paper, you should take the responsibility of arranging a library orientation. Librarians would be happy to cooperate.

22. Have the Counselors visit your classes to foster an awareness of Counseling. Also, R/SS faculty will volunteer to review the SQ4R method of studying your text.

III. STUDENT INITIATED ACTIVITIES

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION - THIS CATEGORY IS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT PEER INFLUENCE CAN PLAY A SUBSTANTIAL ROLE IN STUDENT SUCCESS. AGE DIFFERENCES, PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES, AND SKILL DIFFERENCES CAN BE UTILIZED TO PRODUCE POSITIVE RESULTS IF YOU CAN GET THE STUDENTS TO WORK WITH ONE ANOTHER.

1. Have students read one another's papers before they turn them in. This activity could help them locate one another's errors before being graded.

2. If the class lends itself to a field trip, have the students plan it and make some or all of the arrangements.

3. Ask students to submit sample test questions (objective or subjective) prior to a test. The class itself can compose a test or quiz based on your objectives.

4. Create opportunities for student leaders to emerge in class. Use these leadership skills to improve student performance.

5. If students are receiving tutoring help, ask them to report the content and results of their tutoring.

6. Have students set specific goals for themselves throughout the semester in terms of their learning and what responsibilities they will undertake.

IV. FACULTY INITIATED ACTIVITIES

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION - THIS SECTION PRESENTS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE TO THE ABILITY AND CREATIVITY OF EACH FACULTY MEMBER. YOU MUST TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO IMPLEMENT THESE SUGGESTIONS, TO TEST THEM, AND TO DEVISE OTHERS.

1. Utilize small group discussion in class whenever feasible.

2. Take the initiative to contact and meet with students who are doing poor work. Be especially cognizant of the "passive" student, one who comes to class, sits quietly, does not participate, but does poorly on tests, quizzes, etc.

3. Encourage students who had the first part of a course together to be in the second part together. Try to schedule the same time slot for the second course.

4. Ask the Reading faculty to do a "readability study" of the texts you use in your courses.

5. Develop library/supplementary reading lists which complement course content. Select books at various reading levels.

6. Use your background, experience, and knowledge to inter-relate your subject matter with other disciplines.

7. Throughout the semester, have students submit topics that they would like to cover or discuss.

8. Take them on a mini-tour of the Learning Resources Center, Reading/Study Skills area, NSLL, Counseling Center, etc. If a particular student needs R/SS help, don't send him/her, TAKE HIM/HER.

9. Work with your Divisional Counselor to discuss procedures to follow-up absentees, failing students, etc.

10. Create situations in which students can help you (get a book for you from the library, look up some reference material, conduct a class research project).

11. Set up special tutoring sessions and extra classes. Make these activities, mandatory, especially for students who are doing poorly.

12. Use your imagination to devise ways to reinforce positively student accomplishments. Try to avoid placing students in embarassing situations, particularly in class.

13. Confer with other faculty members who have the same students in class. Help re-enforce one another.

14. Look at your record book periodically to determine student progress (inform them) and determine if you know anything about that student other than his/her grades.

15. Team teach a class with a colleague or switch classes for a period or two. Invite a guest lecturer to class.

16. Use the Library Reference shelf for some of your old tests and quizzes. Tell the students that you will use some questions from the old tests in their next test.

17. Engage in periodic (weekly) self-evaluation of each class. What was accomplished this past week? How did students react?

18. At mid-term and at final exam, you last test question should ask if a student is going to continue at JCC or drop out at the end of the semester. If a potential drop-out is identified, you can advise the student or work with a Divisional counselor.

ATTACHMENT III

To: JCC Faculty
From: Ronald J. Horvath
Re: Faculty Seminar II Results

At the September 15 Faculty meeting, the RRA Project focused on the Recruiting aspect. The suggestions and recommendations listed below are the outcome of the small Faculty groups which worked on the topic.

We will begin to analyze these recommendations to see which ones are feasible, which ones can be implemented, and which ones can be adopted withing a certain time-frame.

Once again, I would like to thank each of you who participated in the process. Faculty Council will be working with me to propose topics for the October meeting. If you have any suggestions, please forward them to your Council Representative.

I. WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC WAYS IN WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL FACULTY MEMBER CAN ASSIST AND TAKE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE PROCESS OF RECRUITING STUDENTS?

A. Faculty Initiative

1. Faculty members must work to improve the academic image of JCC. The College is viewed publicly as being "too easy."

2. Faculty members should be more supportive of JCC activities (plays, concerts, lectures, art exhibits).

3. Faculty members should participate in Career Days and College Nights on a rotating basis.

4. Form a cadre of faculty members to reply to negative news articles about JCC or to those articles which omit JCC.

B. Faculty/Currently Enrolled Students

1. Faculty should share the benefits of JCC with their students. It is not appropriate for faculty to boost those differences between JCC and other schools.

2. Faculty could conduct in-class discussions about JCC programs. Students would then have more information to help in recruiting.

3. Ask students in classes to "spread the word" about positive experiences and courses at the college.

4. Faculty could solicit names of prospective students from currently enrolled students.

5. Ask certain students to make contacts in the community (surveys, etc.) through employers and organizations with which they are associated.

6. Faculty could take some students on the high school visitation trips.

C. Faculty/External

1. Faculty members should keep a high profile of themselves in their community life. Advise children of friends, neighbors, etc.

2. Faculty should establish direct, personal contacts with high school teachers, particularly those in their subject matter area.

3. Faculty should visit high and middle schools as part of an organized recruiting campaign. These visits should be done in late fall or early winter.

4. Faculty could send materials from manufacturing companies or other information to high school teachers that could be used in their classes. This develops and maintains JCC awareness.

5. Faculty who belong to community organizations could make JCC literature available to these groups for use in newsletters, etc.

6. Faculty could invite high school teachers to the college. Visits could include talks with their former students.

WHAT SPECIFIC THINGS CAN THE INSTITUTION DO TO ENHANCE THE ROLE OF FACULTY/STAFF IN THE RECRUITING PROCESS?

A. Advertising

1. Develop class schedules earlier.

2. Develop a JCC Slide Show.

3. Develop some consistency in all college brochures.

4. Develop a brochure for the Art Gallery.

5. A "Speciality Bureau" brochure should be developed, featuring faculty, for possible use by "Omelet," "Morning Show," "Metz," etc.

6. Publicize specialty programs such as Corn Island.

7. Advertise and promote specific academic programs via posters.

8. Advertise on TARC - particularly the ease of getting to JCC on public transportation.

9. Contact and advertize in such places ad Hillenbrand House and Dosker Manor (Donovan Scholars).

10. Publicize what academic departments and faculty are doing in the community as service commitments.

11. Establish contact with the Convention Bureau to bring visitors to campus.

B. Administrative

1. Offer mini-courses in pre-retirement planning for potential Donovan Scholars and other people.

2. Develop a full-fledged sports program.

3. College needs more signs all around campus.

4. Sponsor more cultural events on campus for all age groups.

5. Sponsor social/educational activities on campus when state-wide high school events are held in Louisville (sports play offs, student council conventions, etc.).

6. Sponsor a high-school day on campus. Feature a high school a week.

7. Sponsor mini-courses for local businesses and organizations, particularly mid-management type activities.

8. Print Business Cards for faculty members who want them.

9. Develop a "JCC Pride" campaign.

10. Sponsor a JCC Jingle or Motto contest. Develop a JCC "Saying."

11. Employ a FT Public Relations person with full budget.

12. Provide a FT Secretary for Public Relations.

13. JCC Advisory Board should be more active in promoting JCC.

C. General Suggestions

1. Notify students about their admission to the college and do a follow-up letter from the Division Chairman.

2. Promote student awareness of A.A. and A.S. degrees in general studies.

3. Adopt a new logo with UK incorporated into it.

4. Develop a Registration system to allow employees at larger companies to register at these places of employment.

5. Community service credit should be given to those faculty who actively participate in the recruitment process.

6. Activate an alumni or booster group to generate interest in the college.

7. Work with Community groups such as the YWCA Creative Employment Project to generate interest in adults over 25 years of age.

8. Sponsor meetings and luncheons for Counselor groups who do educational referral work to acquaint them with goals and offerings of the college.

9. Emphasize the broad range of programs (developmental to honors) to Counselors and teachers. Emphasis should be placed particularly upon those who are <u>not</u> considered "college bound."

10. Identify the differences in admissions standards between JCC and U of L.

11. Ask faculty members to volunteer their expertise to high school teachers. Count this as Community Service.

12. Develop information about potential job markets so that data are available for recruiting.

13. Revive the JCC Faculty Pyramid Club (i.e., set a recruitment quota for each faculty member).

ATTACHMENT IV

TO: JCC Faculty

FROM: Ronald J. Horvath

RE: Faculty Seminar III Results
ADVISING

The October 13 Faculty Seminar focused on Advising as an integral part of the RRA Project. The suggestions and recommendations on the attached sheet represents a wide-range of diversified opinions.

One of the common threads that ran throughout the group reports was that the present Advising system needs a good deal of re-structuring. I will address this topic at the November 17 Faculty Meeting; the goal will be to implement a modified Advising system by the middle of the Spring semester.

Once again, I would like to thank each of you who participated in the process. Our next Faculty Seminar session will probably be held in February.

I. ROLE/RESPONSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUAL FACULTY MEMBER

New Students

1. Faculty should not have any responsibilities; counselors should do it.
2. Be present at Orientation to assist and to represent program.
3. Take special interest in new students prior to Orientation and Registration. Contact newly assigned advisees by telephone or letter. Be more active and positive as an institutional representative.

Returning Students

1. Advisers should telephone students periodically to ask how they're doing and to set up appointments for early advising.
2. Send postcards to students to remind them of registration date and other information.
3. Should be available for early-bird advising, but should not be held accountable for follow-up advising.
4. Help to identify students with problems and refer them to places where they can get help (Counseling, Study Skills, Financial Aid).
5. Advisers should retain all advisees throughout their institutional stay. This approach provides for continuity.

Both New and Returning

1. Advisers must arrive on time to advise at registration--throws lots of schedules off when someone is late.
2. Attempt to be more relaxed at registration in order to provide a less stressful situation for students.
3. Give as much one-to-one advising as possible, including advice on the job market.
4. Help students to see the need for taking required and elective courses (i.e., support the curriculum).
5. Keep updated with labor market needs in adviser's area of expertise.
6. Know when to refer students to Counseling Center for Career counseling and/or testing.
7. Should have up-to-date curriculum guides in their possession.

8. Should know where to locate catalogs for senior institutions.

9. Keep files on all student advisees.

10. Maintain definite office hours; increase them during peak advising times.

11. Return all students calls/visits promptly.

12. Minimize cluster advising and emphasize one-to-one approach.

13. Should advising be the responsibility of all faculty?

II. ROLE/RESPONSIBILITY OF DIVISION/PROGRAM

New Students

1. Coordinate the sending out of letters of welcome to new enrollees with Admissions Office.

2. Establish a program to introduce applicant to faculty and advisers.

3. Provide information to applicants on careers and career alternatives.

Returning Students

1. Arrange to have a Counselor talk with specialized classes regarding program requirements.

2. Plan a program/department reception for students by area of interest.

3. Establish set blocks of time for general advising sessions.

New and Returning Students

1. Provide more advisers to students at registration--even if faculty has to work longer hours.

2. Arrange advising schedule that is fair. (Some do too little, some not enough.)

3. Evaluate advising carefully; find out who can't advise.

4. Arrange for name tags for those working at registration.

5. Update curriculum guides for all advisers.

6. Develop a system of peer-advising and a buddy system for Registration.

7. Conduct periodic Division meetings to acquaint faculty with basic institutional services.

8. Program faculty should circulate information on course changes, number changes, etc.

9. Establish an equitable number (fair share) of advisees per faculty member.

10. Be sure that Division is represented at Orientation.

11. Set up a Division folder (continuous process) to record all pertinent information (courses taken, career objective, advice given, etc.) for each student advisee.

III. ROLE/RESPONSIBILITY OF INSTITUTION

New Students

1. Develop system which mandates that students attend orientation.

2. Attempt to effect a less stressful atmosphere at registration by appointing more workers who can ask students if they need help. (Group felt this particularly important since instructions regarding registration are in writing.)

3. Assign adviser at the time of application. A welcome letter should be sent to students which names adviser, a time to meet with adviser prior to registration.

4. Provide advising profile sheets.

Returning Students

1. Publish fall schedule before end of spring semester. (Some in group felt it hard to do early-bird advising without knowing what classes are available.)

2. Push early-bird advising.

3. Reconsider the possibility of doing a full-scale advance Registration.

4. Mail schedules to those currently enrolled.

5. Insure that advisers receive a copy of student grades.

6. Provide for centralized decision-making regarding suspension and probation. Furnish records to each division and/or advisers.

7. Develop a system so that faculty members can have rapid access to student records throughout the semester.

Both New and Returning

1. Arrange for better system for students to receive the name of a permanent adviser...and to understand why they should seek out their adviser.

2. Survey effectiveness of advising at end of registration.

3. Provide for a more permanent on-going relationship between student and adviser.

4. Provide for some flexibility in assigning faculty to specialized areas. Some faculty do more harm than good in advising.

5. Invite more representatives from transfer institutions to be on campus more frequently.

6. Redistribute the number of advisees in a more equitable manner.

7. Use the Student Lounge areas to publicize Advising.

8. Increase the training and supervision provided to faculty and staff to insure that proper standards of courtesy and helpfulness are followed.

9. Provide students with an advisement booklet or form which will be his/her personal record of advisement. Have adviser sign off on all advice.

10. Be sure that advisers are available prior to any Registration period.

11. Use pre-advising sessions to convince students to enroll or to continue.

12. Assign each faculty member an area of expertise (usually their major), but add other students from other fields to equalize load and to gain knowledge in these other fields.

13. Need to develop a system of switching advisers and materials if the student changes majors.

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